Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*

I chose to read this book because the idea of firemen burning books instead of putting out fires is intriguing to me. That and how their world is almost the opposite of ours seemed fascinating.

The genre of *Fahrenheit 451* is classified as science fiction and drama. The story is science fiction because of the weird futuristic events that occur, one example is that cars race extremely fast and all you can see is a blur. Another example is people not wanting to go outside and play, but instead they choose to stay inside and watch TV on a set that is as big as the wall. My favorite example for classifying this science fiction is the flying cars and the firemen with the fire proof suits. There are several key points that could be used to tell how this book is a drama. One key point would be the many deaths that occur in the story and most of the people who died in the book had a direct link with Montag, the main protagonist. For example, his wife tried to commit suicide on sleeping pills, but luckily Montag was there and called an ambulance. The key point that has the biggest impact on the story is when Montag was ordered to burn the library. The owner of the library decided she loved her books so much that she should jump into the fire so she could burn with her books.

Guy Montag is a firefighter who lives in a lonely, isolated society where books have been outlawed by a government fearing an independent-thinking public. It is the duty of firefighters to burn any books on sight or said collections that have been reported by informants. People in this society including Montag's wife are drugged into compliancy and get their information from wall-length television screens. After Montag falls in love with book hoarding Clarisse, he begins to read confiscated books designated to be burned. Through this relationship, he begins to question the government's motives behind book burning. Montag is soon found out, and he must make a decision of whether to run or go back to his job knowing fully what the consequences would be. If caught, some of the severe consequences could imprisonment or even the death penalty.

Guy Montag is the main protagonist in the story with a futuristic setting where books are illegal. In my opinion, the world he lives in is much like that of the setting of Suzanne Collins’ *The Hunger Games*. Guy being a man who follows and enforces the laws eventually has to make many decisions that break the law. He is your everyday fireman that enjoys burning books, but he meets a young girl named Clarisse and everything changes.

Clarisse is a seventeen year old young woman who walks with Montag on his trips home from work every day. She is an unusual sort of person in the bookless society because she is outgoing, naturally cheerful, and unusually intuitive. She is unpopular among her peers and disliked by teachers for asking "why" instead of "how" and focusing on nature rather than on technology. She often skips school because she thinks it is a repetitive pointless routine. Clarisse convinces Montag that he is not in love with his wife, Mildred, whom Montag has been married to for ten years. This idea that he is not in love with his wife embarrasses him, and he tries to deny it, but inside he knows it is true. Only a short time after meeting Montag, Clarisse disappears without any explanation. Mildred along with Montag's his boss, Captain Beatty, claims she was killed in a car accident. Clarisse did not accept the values set forth for her by society, and she rarely took part in their activities. Her most hated event is jet car racing which appealed to the need for constant unthinking stimulation preferred by the majority. Clarisse was an individual who was in touch with her own soul, and she was capable of seeing the world around her as being abnormal and honestly evaluate its’ worth.

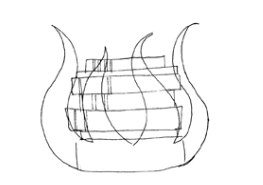
Captain Beatty is a bit of a hypocrite because he is the head fireman, but he is more knowledgeable about books than anyone else. He burns the books with a passion, but he also spends a great bit of time quoting from them. When he speaks it is often full of Biblical references. At one point, he stated to an elderly woman, “You’ve been locked up here for years with a regular damned Tower of Babel.” Beatty once stated to Montag, “You think you can walk on water with your books.” At times he even quotes the Greek myth of Icarus. Captain Beatty is one of the most well-read maniacal book burners.

Plainness is one of the biggest themes for the book. The main point of burning books is to limit the creativity of society to make the jobs of the government rule much easier. The government owns the television and radio broadcast channels. This is one the reasons why people in the future have no desire to anything other than watch television or race cars. More broadly, Bradbury introduces the concept that the presence of fast cars, loud music, and advertisements creates a lifestyle with too much stimulation in which no one has the time to concentrate. After plainness, one of the other themes causing book burning is envy. People do not welcome feeling like they are inferior to those who have read more books than themselves. The novel implies the most important reason leading to censorship is the objections of special interest groups and minorities to ideas in books that offend them. Bradbury is careful to refrain from referring specifically to racial minorities. For instance, Beatty mentions dog and cat lovers instead of a specific race. The reader can only try to decide which special interest groups he really has in mind. Ray Bradbury wrote this novel so he could express why censorship is wrong for society. He believed the world would be a horrible place if books were to be banned, so he gave society an idea of what would happen if people began burning books to limit a free thinking society.

Another major conflict in this book is freedom of speech. The reason for the censorship is to keep the people at bay. The first amendment of the US Constitution is freedom of speech, and in *Fahrenheit 451* there was no opportunity to express your point of view on any topic if it does not agree with the governments’. Censorship is displayed because most all books were illegal especially if someone was expressing their view point that does not agree with the government. It that case they would be silenced by varying methods. Montag displayed this when goes against the government reads illegal books. He rebelled against the government and kept hidden books to preserve them. At the core of the conflict is that Montag is an authority figure and he is breaking the law. This makes Montag a bit of a contradiction because he is a man who has burned so many books, and all of a sudden he decides that he needs to read books so that he can fight the good fight. This sudden love for books has made his life different causing him not to show love for his wife anymore. At this point, Captain Beatty and Montag’s wife began plotting to get his stash of books and burn them so that they could get Montag back to normal.

1. Anesthetized is a drug or process to be numbed to prevent pain or awareness. “He was afraid to get up, afraid he might not be able, with an anesthetized leg.”
2. Perpetual motion is when something starts moving, but doesn’t need anything like electricity or steam to keep it moving. “It’s perpetual motion; the thing man wanted to invent but never did.”
3. Cardamom. “He smelled the heavy musk like perfume mingled with blood and then gummed exhalation of the animal’s breath, all cardamom and moss and ragweed odor in this huge night where the trees ran at him, pulled away, ran, pulled away, to the pulse of the heart behind his eyes.”
4. Valise is a small piece of luggage. “They sealed cardboard valise with clear tape.”
5. Asbestos is a silicate mineral that was often used in walls and brakes. “Now the guild of the asbestos-weaver must open shop very soon.”

*The Martian Chronicles* is a 1950 science fiction short story collection by Ray Bradbury that chronicles the colonization of Mars by humans fleeing from a troubled and eventually atomically devastated Earth. The book illustrates the conflict between native Martians and the new colonists. The book lies somewhere between a short story collection and an episodic novel containing stories Bradbury originally published in the late 1940s in science fiction magazines. The stories were loosely woven together with a series of short publications. This book reminds me of Fahrenheit 451 because of the futuristic setting.

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This picture has a relation to the story because the story is based on burning books. I drew this picture since the protagonist is always saying how he gets to stack the books up then sets the incinerator to 451 degrees Fahrenheit. I drew the books in different sizes to explain how Clarisse believed the different sized books you read the smarter you would be. The reason they are on fire is because it is Guys job to find the books and set them on fire. The reason I typed 451 is because that is the temperature that books burn. http://www.goodreads.com/review/show/430425918